

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for facilitating treatment of a tooth that is at least partially impacted, said apparatus comprising a wire fabricated at least partially from a superelastic material, said wire comprising a first end, a second end, and a substantially planar body extending therebetween, said body having a substantially uniform thickness and movable between a static position and an activated position, wherein said body is stretched between said first end and said second end, and a static position, said first end configured to couple to a tooth that is at least partially impacted, with said body deformed stretched to the activated position, said second end configured to secure said apparatus relative to the tooth, such that said wire applies a substantially constant force to the tooth as said body moves from the activated position to the static position to urge said second end toward said first end.

2. (original) An apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said body comprises at least one eyelet formed between said first and second ends.

3. (canceled)

4. (original) An apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said body is at least one of zigzagged shaped, serpentine shaped, and sinusoidal shaped.

5. (previously presented) An apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said first end is configured to couple to the tooth without circumscribing the tooth.

6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (original) An apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said body comprises a spring extending between said first and second ends.

9. (original) An apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising an orthodontic fixture configured to be secured against an external surface of the tooth, said body first end is configured to couple to said orthodontic fixture.

10. (original) An apparatus in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said wire is fabricated at least partially from a shaped memory alloy (SMA).

11. (currently amended) A method for treating a tooth that is at least partially impacted, said method comprising:

coupling a first end of a wire to an impacted tooth, the wire fabricated at least partially from a superelastic material and having a substantially planar body extending between the first end and a second end, wherein the body has a substantially uniform thickness and is movable between a static position and an activated position, wherein the body is stretched between the first end and the second end and a static position;

stretching the body from the static position to the activated position; and

coupling the wire second end to an anchoring device with the body deformed stretched to the activated position such that the wire applies a substantially constant force to the impacted tooth as the body moves from the activated position to the static position to urge the second end toward the first end.

12. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein coupling the wire second end to an anchoring device further comprises coupling the wire second end to the anchoring device such that at least one eyelet is defined between the first and second ends of the wire.

13. (previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein coupling the wire second end to an anchoring device further comprises coupling the wire second end to the anchoring device such that the body is unbraided between the first and second ends.

14. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein coupling a first end of a wire having a substantially planar body extending between the first end and a second end to an impacted tooth further comprises coupling the first end of a wire fabricated from a superelastic material to the impacted tooth.

15. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein coupling a first end of a wire having a substantially planar body extending between the first end and a second end to an impacted tooth further comprises coupling the first end of a wire fabricated from a super memory alloy to the impacted tooth.

16. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein coupling the wire second end to an anchoring device further comprises coupling the wire second end to the anchoring device such that a substantially constant spring force is applied to the impacted tooth.

17. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 further comprising:

coupling an orthodontic fixture to an external surface of the impacted tooth;
and

coupling the first end of the wire to the orthodontic fixture.

18. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 11 wherein coupling the wire second end to an anchoring device further comprises coupling the wire second end to the anchoring device such that the thickness of the apparatus remains substantially uniform between the first and second ends.

19. (canceled)